

# “Singleness Matters” // 1 Corinthians 7:1–8 //

## *Cutting Through the Noise # 6*

[[VIDEO: Akinsola, Generosity](#)]” *Our mission at TSC is following the HS, we exist to create a movement of DMD who seek the good of the city in RDU and around the world.*

We’ve summarized being a disciple as adopting 5 identities--it’s what we see in Jesus’ life--worshiper, family member, servant, steward, and witness. In that testimony you just saw, Gideon and Alex beautifully illustrate the identity of a steward. They see all that they have as God’s, to be offered first to him for his purposes.

Summit family: generosity is one of the greatest privileges of the Christian life. It adds more joy and enjoyment into your life than just about anything else. It’s why we often say, **“Generosity is not something God wants from you; it’s something he wants for you.”** So, over the next several weeks we’re going to explore that more.

But for today, 1 Corinthians 7, **if you have your Bibles.**<sup>1</sup>

This is a long chapter--with a lot of great stuff in it; but it’s quite a challenge to tackle. It’s about singleness and sex and divorce and other asundry things. The only man in human history fully to understand what Paul taught here in is Nicolas Cage, but unfortunately, he’s so focused on the 35 movies he’s filming right now that he couldn’t be here to share his insight so unfortunately you’re stuck with me.

And let me say: I struggled with whether or not to give this message a PG-13 rating and in the end decided not to--it’s not very detailed and you should be fine... Maybe I should give it like a PG-10 rating. My 11 year old will be in here. But I did want to let you know so that you parents can make whatever decision you want to make. So, as always, if you get up now and quiet slip out to the lobby at your campus, a rep from our family ministries team will help you get your kid to the kids’ ministry place where they will NOT be talking about sex and singleness.

If you remember, **Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is not so much a composed work of theology** as it is Paul just answering a bunch of questions the Corinthians were asking. See how chapter 7 opens? **7:1 Now in response to the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”**

The part in quotes is what is from their letter: He quotes their statement and then responds to it, just like he did in chapter 6. Apparently, there was a group in the Corinthian church who--probably in response to the sexual promiscuity of Corinth--were saying “absolute celibacy is the way to go. Sex is bad. At best, a necessary evil. The truly holy Jesus-people are no-sex people.”

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Andrew Wilson, *1 Corinthians for You*; Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity*; Jon Tyson, “Singleness,” from the series *God & Sexuality*, preached at Bridgetown Church on March 20, 2019; Sam Allberry, *Seven Myths About Singleness*; David Platt, “Beauty in Brokenness, Part 3: Beauty in Both Singleness and Marriage,” sermon preached at McLean Bible Church on February 28, 2021; John Mark Comer, “First Corinthians: Undivided Devotion,” sermon preached at Bridgetown Church on March 13, 2011; Timothy Keller, “1 Corinthians 6–7,” sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on February 7, 2005; Timothy Keller, “Singleness - The Biblical Guideline,” Q&A hosted at Redeemer Presbyterian Church on Sept 8, 1993.

So Paul, in this chapter, talks about how marriage and singleness are BOTH gifts, and how God has a plan for both.<sup>2</sup>

**Note this: Christianity has an incredibly high view of both singleness and marriage.** But here's our dilemma: we live in a church culture \obsessed with marriage. Like--that's the goal for everybody, that's Varsity, and if you don't get married, something has gone wrong and you're stuck on the JV squad. And so, a lot of times in the church single people often feel marginalized. Single people, am I speaking truth here? I know of one church that called its **adult social group, 'Pairs and Spares.'**<sup>3</sup> As if the single people were **spares? Terrible.**

On the other hand, we live in a secular culture obsessed with singleness. Not biblical singleness, mind you, which means remaining celibate, but a no-commitment singleness where you can have sex whenever it's convenient for you with no strings attached.

- Since 1960, the percentage of adults in our country who are married has dropped from 72% to right at 50%<sup>4</sup> and every year in our society the **average age** for a first marriage goes up--right now it's about **30 for men and 28 for women.**
- **Over half the people that come to our church this weekend are single--**about 7000 of you. And we love you, btw. If that's you--if you're single this morning, will you raise your hand? OK, **if you are single but would really be excited about meeting THE ONE sometime soon, keep your hand up... OK,** look around, and see whose hand is up. Just kidding.

**Paul wants to show you God's plan for both marriage and singleness.**<sup>5</sup> He begins by championing the goodness of sex within marriage: **2 But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman should have sexual relations with her own husband.** **Translation:** Sex is a good desire; a God-given desire. Through it God gives some beautiful illustrations of the gospel, and it's his way of propagating the species on earth. He created marriage for that relationship.

**3 A husband should (therefore) fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. 4 A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does.** Now, this would have made total sense to the average Corinthian man. It was just assumed that the wife was the man's sexual servant to fulfill his desires. But then Paul throws a total curveball: **In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does.** That would have blown their minds. Corinthian men held all the cards in marriage. They had sexual mastery over their wives. They could divorce her for any reason. Now Paul is saying to the husband--you should see yourself as her servant as well? Paul is overturning that whole system.

In marriage, both offer their body in service to the other. By the way--sometimes these verses get pulled out of context like they are some kind of sexual trump card one spouse can play whenever they want. "Hey, I want to have sex and Paul says I have authority over your body, so you can't say no without sinning." But that's not what Paul is trying to say--the sexual relationship is a lot more complicated than that. (It reminds me of one of my favorite pics one Christian counselor shared with me that described the way couples sometimes felt about the different way each approached sex in the relationship--**PIC**). Let the listener discern and understand.

Paul is simply saying that in marriage both partners should see themselves as the servant of the other.

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Wilson

<sup>3</sup> Rodney Clapp, *Families at the Crossroads*, 89.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2011/12/14/barely-half-of-u-s-adults-are-married-a-record-low/>;

<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2021/10/05/rising-share-of-u-s-adults-are-living-without-a-spouse-or-partner/>.

<sup>5</sup> Following here the helpful exegesis by Andrew Wilson!

And 5 Do not deprive one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So Paul completely debunks the idea that celibacy is some kind spiritually-superior state. He's commanding you married people to "get after it." (Some of y'all are like, "This is the best sermon I've ever heard." Well, Amen.) But then, Paul takes a turn: 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all people were as I am. (What is he? Single.) But each has his own gift from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

The word he uses is *charisma*, one of the words for "spiritual gift." Paul said, "Marriage is good, and it's a gift, but I'm single--and it's also a gift. And I actually wish MORE of you had this gift."

"But wait, Paul--isn't it necessary to find that special someone and have sex in order to feel fully alive?" Paul says, "Nope. In fact, the most fulfilled person ever to walk the face of the earth was a 33-year old, single man who remained sexually celibate all of his life."

So, 8 I say to the unmarried and to widows (Unmarried AND widows means that he's talking to people who are **single for whatever reason**: those of you who are single because the right person hasn't come along yet; or to those of you who are single again... because your spouse passed away. Or maybe they walked out. Or maybe you proposed and they rejected you. Or maybe you find yourself with an SSA and just have no desire to be married to someone of the opposite sex. For whatever reason you find yourself single, Paul says): **It is good for them if they remain as I am.** (Single.)

Let me give you a handful of completely counter-cultural statements on sex and singleness gleaned from this chapter:

### 1. Singleness is not an inferior state to marriage

Single people **get a raw deal** sometimes and married people in the church are always trying to fix them up as if there was something wrong with them.

- **I had a pastor friend who was single until he was in his 30's.** He said he always got so tired of the little old ladies at his church who would say to him at each wedding, "Don't worry. You're next." He said he'd go up to the same little old ladies at funerals and say, "Don't worry; you're next."
- And sometimes we talk like the reason single people are single is because they are not mature enough for marriage yet: And I know that's not true because **some of the most messed up, immature, dysfunctional people I know are married**—Amen?
- But we say things like: "As soon as you're satisfied in God alone, he'll bring someone special into your life." As if we **earn God's blessings** by achieving a **spiritual Jedi state**.
- Or, "God just has to do a little bit of work on you before he brings you that special someone. You have to become someone wonderful before God gives you someone wonderful." As though God grants marriage as a **reward to the satisfactorily sanctified**.
- Tim Keller says, "Under all these statements is the premise that a single life is (a 2<sup>nd</sup> class life) a state of deprivation for people not yet fully formed for marriage."<sup>6</sup>

**These statements are not true, and that's because** marriage is not some superior state. In fact, any marriage is just a temporary gift that God gives to some for the fulfillment of his purposes.

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<sup>6</sup> Tim Keller, *Meaning of Marriage*, 196–97.

Look at what Paul says in vs. **29** The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none... Sometimes people read that verse and think, "What in the world? Paul is telling men with wives to live as though they didn't have one?" That's like the **patron verse of people going to Vegas**. "Let's live like we have no wives!" That's not what he means.

He explains in verse **31**: For the present form of this world is passing away. And along with it, marriage, which was just a temporary gift. Both married people and single people should realize that their situations are not ultimate--both marriage and singleness are temporary gifts for the fulfillment of God's purposes.

**Throughout the Gospels, Jesus said the most fascinating things about marriage.** Once, in the Gospel of Mark he was asked this really complicated question about marriage--a woman who had 7 husbands because each died and they said, "In heaven, whose wife will she be?" Jesus cuts them off (**Mark 12:25**<sup>7</sup>) and says, "Well, you are wrong in your premise. There is no marriage in heaven."

- **There's no marriage in heaven.** Marriage was just a temporary illustration of the love of God; a temporary means by which God populated the earth. It was a good gift, but soon it will give way to the relationship to which it pointed.

A few chapters before that Jesus had been teaching and somebody called out, "*Jesus, your mother and brothers are here to see you.*" And Jesus look around and said, "*Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.*"<sup>8</sup> Which means that relationships in the church are even more binding than biological ones! .... How cool to be blood related to Jesus?

I love how **John Piper** said it: "God promises you blessings in the age to come that are better than the blessings of marriage and children. Marriage is temporary, but what it stands for lasts forever... Marriage is a temporary institution that finally gives way to the relationship to which it was pointing all along: Christ and the church—at which point marriage fades away. It becomes unnecessary, the way you no longer need a picture of someone when you finally see them face to face."

Or Rebecca McLaughlin: "At its best, marriage and sex are like gateway drugs that point us to a far more fulfilling relationship."<sup>9</sup>

So, again, to go back to **1 Cor 7:29** The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none. **31** For the present form of this world is passing away...

Both married people and single people should realize that their situations are not ultimate--both marriage and singleness are temporary gifts--**light and momentary gifts**--for the fulfillment of God's purposes.

Which leads me to #2...

## 2. The gifts of marriage and singleness both have their advantages

**Marriage is a GIFT.**

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<sup>7</sup> --For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

<sup>8</sup> Mark 3:34

<sup>9</sup> McLaughlin, 161.

- To state the obvious, it was God who looked at man by himself and said, “It is not good that man should be alone; so I’ll make a helper for him.” And the book of Genesis says that God fashioned a woman. The first word used to describe her was “*edzer kenegdo*” which in Hebrew means basically “same but different.” She was made in the image of God just like him (same), but she was made different from him--complementary to him.
- Even though **every person is an individual**, there are general patterns to men and women that go back to how they were created. Most women are more nurturing and thus better at creating a stable home environment. Like many guys, I was not good at creating any kind of home environment. For most guys, their **dream pad** includes a waterbed, a black leather couch and a TV with a PlayStation 5 and surround sound. . . **and that’s it**. Before I got married, **to move** out of my house and into another took me a Ford Mustang, a few bungee cords and 15 minutes. Now, it would take a **full-size SUV just to haul the pillows** that sit on top of my bed. And **another** to haul just the toiletry products in our shower. I look around in our bathroom and wonder what all the stuff IS? Who knew there were so many different kinds of soaps? **My bathroom used to have just one bar of soap in it**, and I cleaned everything with it—my face, my hair, the floors. Again, not everybody is like that, but God made the man and woman complementary so that the two of them together would be a more complete reflection of the image of God than would one gender be alone. And bringing these two complementary pairs together in marriage is a GIFT.
- **Even more importantly**, marriage is a gift because it teaches us, experientially, about the love of God. C.S. Lewis compared it to a **ray of the sun; a ray which** warms our face and makes us look back up along the ray to the God from whom it emanates. I will tell you: **marriage has taught me more about the gospel than anything else**: the kindness, tenderness, forgiveness, security, and unconditional love of God--the doctrines I learned in seminary; I experienced them in marriage.

***Marriage is a gift; Singleness is also a gift.***

- You say, “How so?” Paul explains in vs. **33 The married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided.** (Now, by “worldly” here, he doesn’t mean “sinful.” In this context, he just means earthly concerns.)
  - A healthy marriage takes **a lot of time**. Sometimes you have to stay up late working things out. Your wife needs time. Your kids need time. As a married man, I am not able to go on all the **mission trips I want to go on** anymore. **One of our singles** here was telling me about the most amazing ministry they have been doing, hanging out with a group of Muslim refugees until 10pm multiple nights of the week. I can’t do that anymore. I’ve got to run little people to soccer practice, help them do homework, help them get ready for bed. So, I’m guzzling 5-hour energy drinks on the way home from work because I know my real work is about to start.
    - People ask me, “What are your hobbies?” I say, “*Do you mean, What did they used to be?*” My hobbies are named Kharis, Allie, Ryah, and Adon.
    - Do you have pets? Yep, K, A, R, A. I don’t need any more living beings depending on me right now.
  - **Marriage puts a lot of demands on your money.** I have people to take care of. I want to bless and take care of them. Guys: Being married and having a family is expensive. My wife and I will sometimes call our kids: Tesla, Hawaii vacation, and Beach House because that’s what they cost me. Having a family limits my giving.
  - The sacrifice of my time and money is limited-- divinely limited--because of the responsibilities God gave me to my wife and kids.
- It’s not just limiting for the man. Paul says for the women: Vs. **34 ...And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.**

- If you **get married and have kids**, it affects your career—husband or wife, and for many of you, it may stymie it altogether. I asked an older pastor that I looked to, one who had written several books--**I said, "I'm thinking about book-writing. What are your favorite books that you wrote?" He said, "My favorite? The ones I didn't write when my kids were young."**
- The freedom of a single person to pursue certain things, both recreational and career-wise, is astounding.
- **Single ladies, you get to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit with so much freedom.** For a married woman, so much of her ministry is assigned to her. My wife is a full-time missionary to the Unreached People Group known as the Greear kids. And they are a pretty savage tribe--I assure you that it's no easy assignment I grant you. But that's her assignment. You get to choose where you get engaged.
- **When a refugee family comes to RDU in the middle of the night** and we need some people to help them get settled in, you know who usually shows up? Single women. Some single men, but especially single women. FWIW, I've actually thought that is a great place to meet someone. If you're looking to get married, the kind of person who shows up in the middle of the night to help a refugee family move in is probably the right kind of person. So get on the list.
- **Listen: The majority of our best volunteers around here are single women.** I have told you before that the IMB says that **3 out of 4 applicants to go to the most Unreached places** on the planet are single women. I usually say that to admonish the guys: "Guys, get with it!" But one of the reasons that is true is what Paul is saying here: singleness is a gift that can free you up for mission.

So, it's now wonder Paul says, "**7 I wish that all people were as I am.**" There would be so much extra bandwidth in the church for ministry!

### **3. The first consideration for "Should I get married?" is... (a) Do I have the gift?**

That's the million dollar question, right? How do you know if you have the gift? Well, first, realize that most people have a wrong conception of spiritual gifts--they assume that a spiritual gift is some kind of lifelong assignment that God stamps you with when you leave heaven, like a personality trait. Spiritual gifts don't work like that, and definitely not the gifts of marriage and singleness. I'm going to show you this more when we study 1 Cor 12, but a spiritual gift, **a charisma, is a special empowerment that comes on you for a time** for some spiritual assignment.

ALL of us are single for time, which means all of us, for a time, have the gift of singleness and God will give us the spiritual empowerment to do it well.

You don't look within and mystically see if you've got the gift of singleness. Don't make it complicated. If you are single, you have the gift of singleness. At least for the moment. How do I know? Because you are single. And God will empower you to do it well. And if you are married, you have the gift of marriage. And you can know that because... you are married. Even if you felt like it was a mistake, you have the gift now, and God will give you the spiritual power to do it well.

You say, "Well, I'm single now, but wondering if marriage is a gift God is planning to give me in the future. How can I tell?" Paul gives you a clue in vs **9: For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.**

- Paul says if as you pray about it, your desires to be married burn inside of you, it's ok to ask God for a spouse to meet those needs. But, it could be that in praying about it, God answers your prayer by giving you the ability to control yourself without marriage. Or he might take away the desire to be married, or have another desire grow stronger in your heart.

- I had a friend who prayed about getting married because she thought that's what good Christian girls do, but the more she prayed about it, the less desire she had to get married and the more her passion for a ministry grew. She said she always felt guilty about that; like there was something wrong with her. But then she read this chapter and realized it was all from God and she said it felt like such a relief!

Paul, who had the gift of singleness, describes himself like this: **37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, ...he will do well.** Firmly established; under no necessity; having his desire under control: Is that you? If so, you've **probably got the gift of singleness**, at least for the time being, and you should take advantage of that. If you're not like that, ask God for a spouse.

Paul is like, "This is not mystical. This is really between you and God." (he's kind of flippant)

**36 If any man... feels he should marry—he can do what he wants...**

**39 But if (a wife's) husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants... 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion.**

Translation: Don't make this hard. Pray about it, and let God lead you through your desires. And trust that where he leads you, he will gift and empower you."

#### **4. The second consideration for "Should I get married?" is... (b) "Is it the right time?"**

There's a really interesting verse in this chapter that really confuses people, but when you understand it in context it really makes sense: **26 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is.**

- He goes on to say, "If you are married, stay married. If you are single, remain single." And at first, it sounds like Paul is telling single people, "Don't every seek to get married." But that's not what Paul is saying. Paul says "in view of the present distress" *remain as you are*. Paul was writing in a **particular era of history where persecution against Christians** was at a fever pitch. Christian families were being torn apart and sold into slavery. It is **difficult to go through persecution** as a single person, but when you're married, your worldly troubles multiply! So Paul was like, "In light of all this persecution, now's not a great time to get married and have kids."
- But **that was then and this is now**--Currently, we are not in a particularly persecuted moment. The mask mandate is a little annoying but we're not in a particularly persecuted time. And so I believe in this context **Paul would encourage marriage** more than he did in that one.
- Here's what it means for you: There can be situations, eras, in your life that make it more advantageous for you to wait. For example:
  - o In a season where you're trying to finish your education or get established in your career. Or maybe God has called you to focus on a mission assignment.
  - o Or maybe you need time to heal from something. During those seasons where it is wise to wait, you can trust God that he'll give you the spiritual gifting to wait. One of the reasons to be closely involved in the church is that other people can help you see when those times are.

Which leads me to #5...

#### **5. When it's time, don't wait!**

I love what Paul says in vs. 36 **If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. But whatever you do, vs. 37, Paul says, “...be firmly established.”** Let me follow Paul’s lead here and talk to the guys, since guys are typically the ones to take initiative in relationships.

**Guys: Be firmly established.** Are you going to marry her or not? Don’t be a jerk and flirt and call and hang out with her and lead her on if you don’t know what your intentions are. Well, I’m figuring it out. No, you’re leading her on. You’re being cruel. You’re keeping her close enough to enjoy her without having to commit anything to her. That’s the opposite of Jesus-like love. You’re taking and not giving. Stop it. Make up your mind.

And if there’s a girl you want to ask out, ASK HER OUT. A lot of our Christian sisters have complained to me about the Christian “sneak-a-date” thing. Ladies, you know, where they figure out how to go out with you without having to man-up and go through the danger of **asking you out?** “*Oh, look, we’re here together again.*” The **‘sneak-a-date.’** Or the “friend-ationship,” where you spend so much time together that it’s like you’re boyfriend or girlfriend but you’ve never actually talked about it because that involves risk and potential awkwardness. Stop that. Be a man. Be firmly established.

If you’re engaged, don’t keep a **ring on her finger** with an elusive promise of marriage way out there. Either marry her or don’t. Don’t string her along. Be firmly established.

**And, guys, if you know it’s not time for you to get married, be firmly established** and don’t lead her on. Get on with what God is doing in your singleness. Girls, you too—don’t lead the guy on. **Dating is a road that leads to marriage, and if you’re not ready for the destination, stay off the road!**

(Now, guys, lest you misunderstand me: I’m not saying you need to move **super quickly** and **drop the marriage card** on your first date. Being firmly established should never be confused with creepiness. And if she says “no,” respect that. Hounding a girl after she says no and playing the God-card--God told me to ask you out, is not the way to the blessing of God; it’s the way to get slapped with a restraining order. So be wise.

## **6. Reject the ‘E-harmony’ myth**

**There’s nothing wrong with E-harmony, *per se*,** but the myth is that if you can JUST find the perfect person you’ll be happy. And if you are unhappy right now, finding the perfect person will fix all that. And if you’re married and unhappy right now, it’s because you married the wrong person.

But there’s the truth: **Romance and marriage will never satisfy the deepest needs of your soul.** I’ve said this before, but for most single guys, it’s like they are drowning in a sea of loneliness, insecurity, boredom and despair... problems like loneliness and unhappiness... lonely unhappy single people become...

And let me let you in on a little secret: you always marry the wrong person. First of all, the person you married is a sinner. The person you are so infatuated with was **so bad that Jesus had to die** for them, and pretty soon you’re going to figure that out and it’s not going to be fun. I mean, if **something in them was so messed up** it took Jesus’ blood to fix it, you don’t think it’s going to cause you some mild irritation? Second, psychologists say that even in a lifelong monogamous marriage, we’re married to at least 5 different people over a lifetime, because they change. So if you married the right person at the beginning, soon they change and they are not the right person.

The E-harmony myth is that happiness in marriage depends on finding the perfect person, and it leads to terrible captivity, because you're terrified you will never find the right person, and if you are married, terrified that you married the wrong one.

## 7. (Last one!) Never 'settle.'

- **Vs. 39** tells you to marry "...but only in the Lord." If you get married, you should only do it in the Lord. Translation: You cannot and should not marry a non-Christian. So, duh, you should not date a non-Christian. Why on earth would you lead each other on when it literally can't work out? It's kind of cruel.
- Ladies, let me talk to you: This guy is going to be the **biggest influence on your children**. Don't settle for a guy who won't lead them spiritually. Just about any married person will tell you--it's far better to be single than to be married to someone who doesn't share your core commitments.
- And I know, if you are sitting here and you are not a Christian--you might feel like I'm being mean to you. Like I'm saying you're not good enough for them. I'm not saying that. I'm just being practical. I mean, for your sake. If you are not a Christian and have no intention of becoming one, do you really want to marry a Christian? **Here's why I ask: Because the Christian you are dating right now really wants to convert you.** Can I prove it? They brought you here today. That's why they keep looking over at you, trying to see how you're reacting to what I'm saying.
  - **And, even more:** their whole family is praying for you. They all know you're here this morning and they're praying for you. Their mom and dad are probably fasting, hoping that you become a Christian. And nobody in the family is ever going to be really happy until you become one. If you're not a Christian and have no intention of becoming one, do you really want to marry into a situation where no one is going to be happy with you?
  - Look, I'm just being honest with you; I've observed this for many years.

## (Conclusion)

So there we go. Let me bring this back around to where we started. **Marriage and singleness are gifts. Temporary gifts for the fulfillment of God's purposes in your life.** If you're looking for something to satisfy the deep needs of your soul, it's not going to be found in marriage, or a new marriage. You're going to find it in Jesus and his love for you.

You say, "***But I don't want to be alone RIGHT NOW. I'm tired of being alone.***" You're not supposed to be alone. God created you for relationships, for companionship. And the ultimate place you find that is in the church. Like we saw.

Again, remember this statement from **John Piper: "Marriage is temporary, but what it stands for lasts forever... Christ and the church—at which point marriage fades away. It becomes unnecessary, the way you no longer need a picture of someone when you finally see them face to face."**

For those of my brothers and sisters with SSA who feel like they can't be married--I know a lot of people with SSA who have gotten married to someone of the opposite sex and found a measure of healing--but for those of you that just can't... you can still have a full and meaningful life. Like I said, the most fulfilled, perfect person who ever walked the face of the earth was celibate. God wants you to have deep and meaningful connections in the church.

**Rebecca McLaughlin**, whom we've had here at the church, says, *You won't wither without sex; you will wither without friend and family connection.*<sup>10</sup>

And that's available here in the church. So invest deeply here. And **to THE CHURCH**, let me say this: we have a responsibility to singles in our midst, and that is to invite them into our families:

- First of all, see them as the treasures Paul saw them as. Don't treat them like a project you need to fix.
- **But be aware that their particular calling** has some particular challenges, and so **invite them into** your family to experience relationships there. Invite them to **join you in key moments**. **Not** just to come over and babysit your kids or help you move, by the way. *And all God's singles said...*
- We've had **single friends** from the church go on vacation with us, do Thanksgiving with us. One even spent last Christmas with us. Stayed at our house on Christmas Eve and got up with us on Christmas morning
- **\*\*Singles: The greatest predictor of if a child will continue on in the faith—5 adult relationships in the church outside of parents... If you don't have kids, be that for some other kids here. Get involved in the lives of other kids. Could be formal (student ministry), or informal**

This is the body of Christ!

## MUSIC VAMP

Every head bowed... What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Have you given your life to Jesus? This is the love you were created for. The arms you have been searching for in romance are his arms. You can receive it right now. Receive the love of God by receiving Christ as Lord and Savior. I have good news for you: Whoever you are, whatever you've done, God is ready to receive you into his family; he sent his Son to die on a cross to pay for your sin and he offers to give you forgiveness of sins and new life if you'll be reconciled to him. Are you ready to stop running away and receive him? If so, pray with me. Right now... Text **READY to 33933**

Young Adults gathering:

- November 19th, Summit En Espanol (near our Brier Creek Campus). They've also got a retreat coming up in January that they're really excited about.
- Volunteer!
- Go to our website for more info, or you can just follow **summitrdu\_youngadults** on Instagram for the latest updates on gatherings and events.

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<sup>10</sup> *Confronting Christianity*